

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE HUGUENOTS OF FRANCE.

HISTORY OF THE RISE OF THE HUGUENOTS OF FRANCE. By HENRY M. BAIRD. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 777, 681. Charles Scribner's Sons.

The history comprised in the present volumes, although strictly speaking of an ecclesiastical character, may be considered as identical with the political history of France for a period of not less than half a century. It embraces the time from the accession of Francis I. in 1515, to the death of Charles IX. in 1574, at which epoch the doctrines of the Reformation had become well-grounded in France, and the Huguenots had outgrown the feebleness of infancy and stood as a distinct and powerful body before the religious world. In preparing the learned and elaborate work which will give the name of the author an honorable place on the distinguished list of American historians, Professor Baird has made a judicious use of the researches and discoveries which, during the last thirty years, have shed a fresh light on the history of France at the era of the Reformation. Among the ample stores of knowledge which have been laid open to his inquiries are the archives of the principal capitals of Europe, first time during that period for the most part unknown to the learned world, have been rescued from obscurity. At the side of the voluminous chronicles long since printed, a rich abundance of contemporary correspondence and hitherto unedited memoirs has accumulated, which afford a copious collection of life-like and trustworthy views of the past. The secrets of diplomacy have been revealed. The official statements drawn up for the public may now be tested by the more truthful and unguarded accounts conveyed in either to the foreign courts of Europe. Of not less importance, perhaps, than the official publications are the fruits of private research, among which are several valuable collections of original documents. While the author has not failed to enrich his pages with the materials derived from these and similar sources, he has made a careful and patient study of the best of original chronicles, histories, and kindred productions which have long been more or less familiar to the world of letters. The fruits of his studious labors, as presented in these volumes, attest his diligence, his fidelity, his equanimity of judgment, his firmness of mind, his clearness of perception, and his accuracy of statement.

Briefly touching upon some of the important points discussed by Professor Baird, we shall enable our readers to appreciate the soundness of his treatment and the interest of his narrative. Among the popular opponents of the Church of Rome prior to the Reformation, the author gives a rapid sketch of the Cathari or Albigenses, of which sect or sects the origin, he remarks, is obscure and uncertain, and the reports of their creed and worship are inconsistent or incredible. There remains scarcely an authentic exposition of the belief for which they encountered death with so much reluctance. The record of their fanatical self-devotion has been preserved only in the chronicles of hostile ecclesiastics. But there is no doubt that a large number of men and women, quiet and peaceable in their disposition, and honest in their lives, continued through a long series of years to profess against the worship of saints and angels, and the inventions of a corrupt Church. Strange doctrinal errors, as Professor Baird affirms, found a foothold in parts at least of the extensive territory in Southern France occupied by the Albigenses. Oriental dualism probably disfigured the creed of portions of the sect. The belief of others scarcely differed from that of the less numerous Waldenses of Provence or of their brethren of the valleys of Piedmont. But the progress of the Albigenses during the latter part of the twelfth century affords a remarkable anticipation of the revolt of the French mind against the priestly despotism that crushed all freedom of thought, which three hundred years later sprang up on the same soil, and bore the most abundant fruit.

With the suppression of the Albigenses, there was no further open popular protest against the errors of the Church until the period of the Reformation. The name of Huguenots was first applied in 1550 to a body of "converts," in part religious, in part political, scattered over France in uncertain numbers. The origin of the term is not known. Several plausible theories have been suggested, but all of them probably equally remote from the truth. It is most likely that the term arose from some trivial circumstance that has completely passed into oblivion. The rise of the party was rapid and unexpected. It sprang up, as it were, in a night. The seed had been sown for nearly forty years, still the fruit had been comparatively slight; but now the harvest seemed, as by a miracle, to cover the whole surface of the extended field. The grains of truth which had lain long in an arid soil, apparently without life, now suddenly developed into robust vitality. There was not a corner of the kingdom in which the germs of Protestant churches were not found in considerable numbers. In large tracts of country the Huguenots had become so numerous that they were no longer able, even if they had been so disposed, to conceal their religious sentiments, nor content to celebrate their rites in private or nocturnal assemblies. Among the causes of this sudden development, Professor Baird refers to the remarkable progress of letters in France during the previous forty years. The French language had become the most polite of the tongues spoken in Western Europe. Thanks to the schools fostered by the royal bounty, the public mind was in some measure emancipated from the influence of superstition. It perceived the absurdity of the romantic lives of the saints with which people had formerly been satisfied. The pretended miracles of the papal churches and convents were closely scrutinized, and the trickery exposed by which a corrupt clergy sought to maintain itself in popular esteem. Next to the translation of the Bible, the "Christian Institutes" of Calvin exerted the most powerful influence. The close logic of that work and its clear and nervous style touched a chord of sympathy in every Frenchman, and, while captivating the ear, made a deep impression on the intellect and heart. The version of the Psalms by Marot and Beza, as they were wafted into popularity by the novel beauty of the music to which they were sung, produced a powerful aid to the arguments of the Reformation. "They entered the house of the peasant, and invested his homely scenes with a calm derived from the contemplation of the bliss of a Heaven where the fleeting distinctions of the present shall melt away. They served the humble artisan to perceive the eternal and cheerful reward of industry and piety. They attracted the gathering of persecuted reformers to the by-stander, the retired hermit, or on the open heath or mountain side, the youth who preferred their melody and intelligible words to the jargon of a service conducted in a tongue understood only by the learned. In the royal court, or rising in a loud chorus from a thousand voices on the crowded *Parnassus*, they were winged messengers of the truth, where no other messengers could have found utterance with impunity. The purity of life of the victims who were put to death for their religion, when contrasted with the corruption of the clergy and the dissoluteness of the court, deeply affected all observing and reflecting minds. "The character and numbers of the religious teachers exerted a powerful influence on the spread of Protestant doctrines. Converts from the Church of Rome, principally priests and monks, were the first apostles of the Reformation. Few of them had received systematic training, none had a thorough acquaintance with the Bible. But now their place was taken by a brotherhood of theologians, men of intellect and learning, as well as zealous for the faith. Geneva was the nursery from which a vigorous stock was transplanted to the soil of France. The school of Calvin and Beza moulded the religious doctrine of France. The young preachers from Lake Lemane were prompted by a stern sense of duty, or the more powerful attraction of Divine love. They embraced a vocation in which poverty, fatigue, and almost inevitable death stared them in the face. But they entered it with intelligence and courage, and their unselfish endeavor met with abundant recompense.

The political ferment was not less active than the religious. The movement of the Huguenots had been branded as a conspiracy against royal authority. A host of replies was called forth, and their political action was presented in its true light as an effort to overthrow the intolerable usurpation of the Guises. The tyrants were no match for the patriots in the use of the pen, but it fared ill with the writers, when their secret was discovered. At this crisis, an illustrious statesman appears upon the stage in the person of Chancellor de l'Hopital. His connection with Lorraine at first augured little good of his influence. But in a few years, he gave ample proof of the integrity of his character and the sagacity of his plans. He accepted the highest judicial post in the kingdom at a critical juncture, not through the stirrings of ambition, but from a sincere desire to serve his country. Chancellor de l'Hopital was a person of distinguished presence. His august bearing produced a deep impression. His calm and dignified countenance bore a striking resemblance to the features of an ancient Greek philosopher. Another eminent personage, Admiral de Coligny, whose name occupies a large space in these volumes, now begins to be seen in a conspicuous light. He had espoused the cause of the Protestants a few years before, and in his support. At the suggestion of L'Hopital and Coligny a council of notables was convened in Fontainebleau for the purpose of devising measures to allay the existing excitement. The monarch and a selection from the most powerful nobles and clerics of France were assembled in the spacious apartments of the Queen Mother. The session opened with a brief speech from the King, setting forth the objects of the convocation. He was followed by the Chancellor de l'Hopital, who was less concise in his statements, insisting that the disease of the State was not incurable, if only the cause could be detected. At a subsequent session, Admiral de Coligny said that he had recently visited Normandy, in pursuance of the royal command, to ascertain the origin of the commotions. He had discovered no feelings of ill-will toward the crown. The excitement was entirely due to the illegal violence with which the people had been treated for the sake of religion. He asked permission to present the petitions of the persecuted, who offered to prove that their doctrines were in accordance with the teachings of Scripture and the traditions of the primitive church. The King gave his assurance to Coligny that he took his action in good part, and that his previous identity was a sufficient pledge of his present zeal. The petitions purporting to come from "the faithful Christians scattered in various parts of the kingdom." They set forth the severity of the persecutions which the Huguenots were subjected; they begged for an intermission of the cruel measures which had deluged France with blood; and professed a loyal allegiance to the King whom God had called to the throne. This was a perilous step on the part of Coligny. His defence of toleration made him liable to the extreme penalties which had been inflicted on others for much less courageous utterances. The very boldness of the movement secured his safety, when more timid councils would perhaps have proved his ruin. Yet the bold murmurs of the opposite party announced their distrust of the courage of the Admiral kindled the courage of the others to a brighter flame. It is a singular fact that the most ardent advocates of toleration and reform were found on the episcopal bench. Two of the lay-bishops, Moulins and Mareuil, spoke at length in favor of the Huguenots. A startling contrast was drawn between the means that had been taken to propagate the new doctrines, and those which had been employed for their suppression. For thirty years, it was said, more than three hundred ministers of the purest and noblest character had been attracting disciples "by the sweet name of Jesus continually upon their lips, and had easily gained over a people that were as sheep without a shepherd." Meanwhile popes had been engaged in war; ministers of justice had made use of the royal enactments against heresy to enrich their own purses; and bishops instead of showing solicitude for their flocks had sought only to preserve their revenues. Forty bishops might be seen at once indulging in scandalous excesses in Paris while the king was kindling in their dioceses. The ecclesiastical offices became contemptible when prelates conferred benedictions on their barbers, cooks, and footmen. It was urged that the Gospel should be published and preached; that there should be daily sermons in the palace; that the singing of psalms should take the place of the foolish songs sung by the maids of the Queen; and that no punishment should be inflicted for heretical beliefs, which were not accompanied by acts of sedition. The speeches of the bishops made a profound impression, and the effect was deepened by the earnest eloquence of Coligny, whose turn it was to address the Council on the next day. He would place his life and whatever he held most dear that the hatred of the people was not directed against the King, but his Ministers, who had surrounded him with a guard as if he needed protection against his loyal subjects. He contended that the petitions of the Huguenots, which he had presented to be granted; that they should be allowed to assemble for the worship of God, the preaching of the Gospel, and the celebration of the sacraments. The Guises spoke on the same day in reply to Coligny. The Duke was passionate in his rejoinder, and paid little heed to the questions proposed for deliberation. The Cardinal was more polite, and gave no sign of the deadly hatred which from that time both brothers cherished against Coligny.

The sudden death of Francis II., near the end of the same year (1560), put a stop to the execution of a widespread plan for the complete extermination of the Huguenots. Had he lived but a week longer, their ruin might perhaps have been consummated. But the political power was transferred, at a single stroke, from the hands of Francis and Charles of Lorraine to those of Catherine de Medici and the King of Navarre. The Protestants of Paris recognized in the event a direct answer to their prayers. Never was there a better opportunity for a prince of the blood to combine his own claims with the cause of justice than now fell to the lot of Antoine de Navarre. The sceptre had passed from the hands of a youth of uncertain majority to those of a boy who was incontestably a minor. Charles, the second son of Henry II., who now succeeded his elder brother, was only ten years of age. The regency unquestionably belonged to Antoine as the first prince of the blood. Every sentiment of self-respect dictated that he should assume the high rank to which he was entitled by his birth and that he should protect the Huguenots who looked up to him as their natural defender. But he was persuaded to cede his regency to that wily intriguer, the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, a foreigner by birth and not of royal blood. For himself, he merely retained the first place under her as lieutenant-general of the kingdom. Antoine was a person of singular, changeable, and altogether untrustworthy character. Addicted to excessive sensual indulgence, he was without a trace of energy or resolution. It was the least of Catherine that she disposed of him just as she pleased.

The position of Catherine was not an easy one. She was beset with grave financial difficulties. The Crown was almost hopelessly involved. But this was not the worst. The kingdom was rent with dissensions. Two religions were struggling, the one for supremacy, the other for recognition. Catherine had no strong religious convictions to decide her which of the two she should embrace. Two powerful political parties were contending for the ascendancy, that of the princes of the blood, and that of an ambitious family newly introduced into the kingdom. In the absence of any convictions of right, Catherine regarded the success of either as prejudicial to her own authority. She therefore resolved to play off one against the other, in order through their mutual antagonism to gain the command of both. The situation was one of appalling difficulty for a woman with no consciousness of integrity and devotion to duty. For a woman who was naturally timid, and inclined by education to resort to guile to judicial astronomy or magic rather than to religion.

Passing over the period of the civil war from 1562 to the peace of St. Germain in 1570, which is treated with admirable lucidity and justness of proportion, in the well-wrought narrative, we come to the cardinal event in the religious history of France, the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in

1572, to the discussion of which Professor Baird brings a prolonged study of the most recent, as well as the oldest historical authorities, a singular evenness and balance of mind, and a coolness of observation and judgment which is proof against the biases of party or prejudice. It is a rare gift, a few of the leading points which are placed by the author in prominent relief, it appears that for some time previous to the massacre, the relations of the King (now Charles IX.) with Catherine and Anjou (afterward Henry III.) had suffered a visible change. He no longer showed his accustomed respect for his mother, or his usual kindness for his brother. This was ascribed to the influence of Coligny. The Admiral was believed to have made some sinister expression of them on the mind of the King. From that moment they decided to get rid of Coligny at all hazards. The aid of the Duchess of Nemours was relied on, and he had conceived a mortal enmity against the Admiral, whom she unjustly believed to have instigated the assassination of her husband. Her hatred on this account extended to the whole body of the Huguenots. She heartily entered into the project of Catherine and Anjou, and herself arranged the details of the plan which was at once to be carried into execution. "Such," says Professor Baird, "was the germ of the massacre, as yet not resolved upon, which rapidly developing, was to involve the murder of thousands of innocent persons throughout France. In opposition to the opinion that became almost universal among the Protestants, and gained nearly equal currency among the Catholics—that the butchery had long been contemplated, and that Charles was privy to it—and notwithstanding the circumstances that seem to give color to this opinion, I am compelled to acquiesce in the belief expressed by the Papal Nuncio, Salviati, who, in his dispatches written in cipher to the Cardinal Secretary of State, could certainly have had no motive to disguise his real sentiments, and whom it is impossible to suppose ignorant of any scheme for the general extermination of the Protestants, had such a scheme existed for any considerable length of time: 'As to all the statements that will be made respecting the firing upon the Admiral and his death, different from that which I have written to you, you will in time find out how true they are. Madame, the Regent having come to be at variance with him [the Admiral], and having decided upon the step a few days before, caused him to be fired upon. This was without the knowledge of the King, but with the participation of the Duke of Anjou, the Duchess of Nemours, and her son, the Duke of Guise. If the Admiral had died at once, no others would have been slain. But inasmuch as he should not be slain, they arranged that some great calamity would appear should he draw closer to the King, they resolved to throw aside shame, and to have him killed together with the rest. And this was put into execution that very night.'"

As the hour approached, Coligny exhibited no fear of special danger. Others felt alarm. Some acted upon their fears. Dark hints had been thrown out by the courtiers. There were rumors of his mysterious disappearance. But Coligny kept at his post. On Friday morning, August 22, he went to the Louvre to attend a meeting of the royal council. It was between 10 and 11 o'clock, when, according to the primitive usage of those days, he left the palace to return home for dinner. Meeting Charles just coming out of a chapel in front of the Louvre he returned with him to the tennis court. Accompanied by ten or twelve gentlemen, he again set forth, but had hardly proceeded a hundred paces when an arquebuse was fired at him from behind a fatigued. The shot was well aimed, and might have proved fatal, had not the victim at that very moment turned a little to one side. As it was, one of the three balls with which the arquebuse was loaded, took off a finger of his right hand, and another lodged in his left arm, making a serious wound. He was carried to his home a few steps further, and the wound was repaired, but to a gentleman who had been on the way to attend to him, that the balls were poisoned. "Nothing will happen but what it will please God to order." The next morning Coligny's physicians announced that his wounds were not dangerous. This was the signal for Catherine and Anjou to come to a final decision with regard to relieving themselves from their present embarrassments. Coligny would recover, and was likely to be more than ever the idol of the Huguenots, to become more than ever the favorite of the King. In that case the influence of Catherine and her younger son would be lost; especially if the judicial investigation then in progress should show that they were the prime movers in the plan of assassination. The Huguenots, moreover, were loud in their demands for justice, which to guilty consciences sounded like threats of retribution. They immediately began to plot the King with arguments. Charles, at last, was won over to their side. From being the friend of Coligny he became the accomplice in his murder. It now only remained to decide upon the number of the Protestants who should be involved with him in a common destruction, and to complete the arrangements for the execution of the plot. How many and who were the victims, whose sacrifice was predetermined, are questions, says the author, which with our present means of information, we are unable to answer. We may, however, consider it established that fauted political exigencies demanded the assassination of but very few persons; that personal hatred added many more; and that a still greater number were murdered in cold blood simply that the spoils might enrich the assassins. To the question: What part must be assigned to religious zeal? Professor Baird replies, to a true outgrowth of religion, none at all; but much to the depraved moral teachings of its professed representatives. The hatred of Protestantism engendered in the Catholic people by traditions of enormities now borne its fruit in revolting legends of every sort; while the doctrine enunciated by priests, bishops, and monks that obedience to heretics ought to be exterminated from the face of the earth, permitted many a Parisian burgher to commit acts from which any but the most diabolical nature would otherwise have recoiled in horror. It was on a Sunday morning, the 24th of August, that the terrible work was begun in the streets of Paris. Torches and blazing lights had been burning all night in the great thoroughfares. The houses of the Huguenots had been marked with a white cross. The assassins were as a badge a white cross on the hat and a handkerchief tied about the right arm. The signal for beginning was given by the great bell on the "Palais de Justice." Coligny was one of the earliest victims. The frenzy that had fallen on Paris affected all classes alike. Every feeling of pity seemed to have been blotted out. The weaker sex was not spared in the universal carnage, and suffered outrages that were worse than death. The bodies of the Huguenot leaders were laid in a long row and exposed to the derision and insults of the courtiers. The Queen Mother with a boy of ladies went gayly down the palace stairs to feast their eyes upon the sight of the uncovered dead. The King, the Queen Mother, and their intimate friends seemed to be in an ecstasy of joy. They indulged in boisterous laughter at the reports of the municipal authorities from hour to hour that the war was now ended in reality, they were heard to say, "and we shall henceforth live in peace." The carnival of blood was continued on the succeeding days with little abatement of its frenzied excitement. Paris soon began to resemble a vast charnel house. The greater part of the work was done in the first three or four days, but it was not terminated for several weeks, and many a Huguenot creeping out of his place of concealment was murdered in cold blood by those who coveted his property. Several thousand persons were butchered in Paris alone during the first few days, besides the later victims; precisely how many it is not easy to fix with certainty. The number has been variously estimated at from 1,000 to 10,000, and Professor Baird is inclined to place the figure at between 4,000 and 5,000 persons of all ages and conditions. The massacre rapidly extended from Paris to the provinces. There was a great variety of procedure, showing the absence of a concerted plan; but everything tended to the total destruction of the Huguenots, an object which the King had resolved to accomplish. He determined that not a single one should survive to reproach him with what he had done. Meantime, the tidings were carried beyond the boundaries of

France, exciting a thrill of delight or a cry of execration according to the sympathies of those to whom they came. Nowhere was the surprise greater, or the joy more intense than in Rome. Pope Gregory had been very sceptical in regard to the intentions of the French Court. But the news of the massacre removed the doubt. It was received as a signal blessing for the Roman See. A jubilee was published for the whole Christian world; the cannon of St. Angelo was fired as a signal of victory over the enemies of the Church; and for three successive nights there was a general illumination. A medal was struck in honor of the event, and pictures were painted in the Vatican palace, by the order of the Pope, representing different scenes in the Parisian massacre. But in the eyes of the world, Charles IX. stood convicted of an infamous crime. No ingenious sophistry, no barefaced perversion of facts, could clear him in the judgment of impartial men of either creed, from the guilt of an unparalleled butchery of his subjects.

Professor Baird briefly, but clearly, discusses "the historical question which still agitates the world," "respecting the extent to which the Roman Church and the Pope, in particular, must be held responsible for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day." In answer to this inquiry, the author affirms that as far as Queen Catherine was concerned, as far as admitted by all, no zeal for religion controlled her conduct. A dissolute and ambitious woman, and almost an avowed atheist, she could not have acted from a belief that it was her duty to exterminate heresy. But it can scarcely be doubted that among her inferior agents there were some who thought they glorified God by ridding the world of the enemies of his Church. The number of these assassins from religious motives, however, must have been small compared with the multitude to whom religion was merely a pretext, while capacity or partisan hatred was the real motive, but who still derived their inspiration from the lessons of the priests, who in countenancing assassination must be held to be responsible for the crimes of this class of persons that for the odium of more sincere devotees. But whether the Queen Mother and the King's Ministers were honest, or were Roman Catholics, or were, in fact, Christians only in name, is not essential to the question. If the Pope had for years urged the suppression of heresy by the annihilation of the heretics, if he had familiarized the minds of King and Queen with the thought of justifiable massacre, it is of little importance to ascertain whether his pupils executed the injunction from a pure desire to promote the interests of the Papal See, or with more selfish designs. But the course pursued during the entire pontificate of Pius V. was of the character above described. To his last breath, Pope Pius retained the same thirst for the blood of the heretics of France. It was his standing order to the commander of the papal troops in the service of Charles that every heretic who fell into his hands should at once be put to death. With such continual papal exhortations to bloodshed, we can scarcely hesitate, says the author, to find the head of the Roman Catholic Church guilty, if not of devising the mode of its execution, of paving the way for the commission of the crime. "Without the teachings of Pius V.," he remarks, "the conspiracy of Catherine and Anjou would have been almost impossible. Without the preaching of priests and friars at Lent and Advent, the passions of the people could not have been inflamed to such a pitch as to render it capable of perpetrating atrocities, which will forever render the reign of Charles IX. infamous in the French annals." In regard to the number of Huguenot victims throughout France, the author estimates it at between 20,000 and 30,000, as conjectured by De Thou, and 30,000, as stated by Jean de Severac. He adopts the extreme views of Sully and Perceux, the latter of whom swells the count of the slain to 100,000 men, women, and children.

While the research and well-directed erudition exhibited in this work are amply creditable to the learning and scholarship of the author, its literary execution amply attests the excellence of his taste, and his judicious and skill in the art of composition. He affects no display of erudition, but with a sign of haste or erudition, often showing a no less remarkable aptness in the choice of words than aptness in the formation of opinion. The most conspicuous features of his writing are purity and force of diction, with felicity of arrangement, but there are not infrequent passages in the narrative equally striking for their simple beauty and quiet strength. His work is one of the most important recent contributions to American literature, and is entitled to a sincere greeting for its manifold learning and scholarly spirit.

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